

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 PM-03 DODE-00 MC-02 AID-10

IGA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /076 W

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R 300545Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9749

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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LIMDIS

CORRECTED COPY (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MCAP, PFOR, AF, IN, IR, PK, UR

SUBJ: PERSPECTIVE FROM AFGHANISTAN -- RESULTS RESUMPTION

LETHAL ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN

SUMMARY: IN THE EVENT THAT OUR POLICY ON LETHAL ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN IS BEING REVIEWED, WE HAVE DONE AN ESTIMATE OF THE IMPACT ON US-AFGHAN RELATIONS OF A RESUMPTION OF SUCH SALES. THE IMPACT, ALTHOUGH HARMFUL TO U.S. -AFGHAN RELATIONS IN THE SHORT-RUN, WOULD NOT FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECT US-AFGHAN RELATIONS PROVIDED WE GIVE THE AFGHANS ADVANCE AND HIGH-LEVEL NOTICE OF SUCH A POLICY SHIFT.

END SUMMARY

1. AFGHAN REACTION. THERE WOULD BE AT LEAST LIMITED SHORT-TERM DAMAGE TO AFGHAN-US RELATIONS WERE THE US AGAIN TO BECOME A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY EQUIPMENT SOURCE FOR PAKISTAN. THERE WOULD LIKELY BE A SIMPLISTIC REASONING ON PRESIDENT DAOUD'S PART THAT THIS WOULD BE, PER SE, AN UNFRIENDLY ACT BY THE US TOWARDS

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AFGHANISTAN. PRESIDENT BAOUD WOULD EXPRESS THIS VIEW IN SOME

FORM TO THE AMBASSADOR, BUT SUCH A PROTEST WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. THERE WOULD ALSO BE CRITICAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS IN KABUL. THERE MIGHT BE ANTI-U.S. DEMONSTRATIONS IN KABUL. THESE WOULD PROBABLY OCCUR ONLY IF THE GOA BELIEVED THAT IT COULD CONTROL SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS, AND IF THERE WERE CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF THE GOA THAT THEY COULD BE KEPT FROM GETTING UGLY. A FACTOR INHIBITING THE OCCURENCE OF ANTI-US DEMONSTRATIONS IN KABUL IS DAOUD'S KNOWN CONCERN ABOUT ALLOWING ANY PROTEST GROUP TO ASSEMBLE IN THE PRESENT DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT. IT SEEMS AMPLY CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT DAOUD BELIEVES THAT AFGHANISTAN NEEDS THE U.S. AS A COUNTER-BALANCE TO THE USSR. THEREFORE, HE IS UNLIKELY TO ENCOURAGE OR TOLERATE ANY SERIOUS EROSION IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE DRIVEN TO THE USSR FOR MAJOR QUANTITIES OF NEW ARMS BY THIS DEVELOPMENT ALTBET.

WERE THE U.S. TO RESUME PROVIDING LETHAL ARMS TO PAKISTAN WE WOULD PROBABLY SEE A STRENGTHENING OF LEFTIST PRO-SOVIET INFLUENCES ON THE GOA. IN SOME WAY PRESIDENT DAOUD WOULD HAVE TO BEND TO THESE INFLUENCES. HE WOULD ALSO PROBABLY SEEK TO AMELIORATE THESE PRESSURES BY TURNING TO INDIA AND IRAN AND OTHER NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES FOR GREATER SUPPORT RATHER THAN BY TILTING SHARPLY FURTHER TOWARD THE USSR. HE WOULD ALSO PRESS STILL HARDER FOR EVIDENCE OF U.S. INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT FOR AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND DEVELOPMENT. THERE WOULD BE PRESSURE FOR NEW AID COMMITMENTS AND FOR HIGH-LEVEL, VISIBLE CONTACTS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS.

IN SUMMARY, WHILE A NEW U.S. ARMS SUPPLY TO PAKISTAN WOULD BE HARMFUL TO AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS, WHILE IT WOULD BE DEPLORED BY PRESIDENT DAOUD AND OTHERS IN THE GOA, WHILE IT WOULD IN THE SHORT TERM STAND TO BENEFIT SOVIET INTERESTS IN AFGHANISTAN, SUCH A POLICY HAS BEEN LIVED WITH BY AFGHANISTAN BEFORE AND WOULD BE ACCOMMODATED TO AGAIN -- AT SOME AT LEAST SHORT-TERM COST IN THE CORDIALITY OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND WITH THE AFGHAFK PRESSING FOR NEW EVIDENCE OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND DEVELOPMENT.

2. U.S. POLICY. IF WE WERE TO DECIDE TO RESUME LETHAL ARMS SHIPMENTS TO PAKISTAN, WE SHOULD INFORM THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT
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IN ADVANCE, GIVING IT THE RATIONALE FOR OUR CHANGE IN POLICY. ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD NOT SOFTEN AFGHAN REACTION, IT WOULD AT LEAST DEMONSTRATE THAT WE HAD TAKEN AFGHAN SENSITIVITIES INTO ACCOUNT AND KEEP CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN ON THIS VITAL (FOR AFGHANISTAN) MATTER. THIS INFORMATION AND RATIONALE SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO THE AFGHANS IN THE FORM OF A PERSONAL COMMUNICATION TO PRESIDENT (AND FOREIGN MINISTER) DAOUD FROM THE SECRETARY. THIS COMMUNICATION SHOULD REAFFIRM OUR SUPPORT FOR

AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND DEVELOPMENT.

REGARDING ANY AFGHAN REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL U.S. ASSISTANCE,
WE SHOULD NOT CHANGE OUR PRESENT POLICY OF BASING THAT ASSIST-
ANCE PRIMARILY ON THE CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY THE FOREIGN
ASSISTANCE ACT, WHILE MAKING CLEAR THAT WE HOPE TO CONTINUE
TO MAINTAIN A SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR
AFGHANISTAN.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, MILITARY SALES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KABUL06203
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740275-0784
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974093/aaaaaciz.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PERSPECTIVE FROM AFGHANISTAN -- RESULTS RESUMPTION LETHAL ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN
TAGS: MARR, MCAP, PFOR, AF, IN, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005